

BOOK REVIEW

John M. Kingsbury. 1988. *200 Conspicuous, Unusual, or Economically Important Tropical Plants of the Caribbean*. Pp. 225; 748 illust.; indexed. ISBN 0-9612610-2-1. Available from Bullbrier Press, 10 Snyder Heights, Ithaca, NY 14850. (Soft cover, \$20.00)

This beautifully illustrated little book is an excellent guide to rapid identification of the more commonly encountered flowering trees, shrubs and vines of the islands in and around the Caribbean Sea. It includes both native and exotic species, and shows them in the full panoply of their floral, vegetational and ecological contributions to the landscape. Descriptions are on the left side of each double page, and illustrations of that plant are on the right. The book is useful throughout the tropics worldwide where people have been engaged in horticulture, because these ornamentals have been introduced freely from one native area into essentially all others with like growing conditions.

Plants selected for inclusion are clearly recognizable, and for the most part include as well close-up photographs of flowers, fruits and other unusual features such as bizarre leaves, stems and roots which often aid in identification. I detected only two errors; one of the pictures attributed to the mistletoe *Phoradendron* is of a fruiting branch of *Dendropemon*, and *Tillandsia recurvata*, the ball moss of the islands, is misidentified as *T. usneoides*, the Spanish Moss common along our moist Gulf coasts.

The book is well worth taking along as a reliable field companion for anyone interested in learning to identify the often startlingly beautiful major components of the flora found at our southern doorsteps. It also serves as a marvelous recall device when relating one's plant discoveries to other friends not fortunate enough to have been there with you.

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